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ABSTRACT

This second volume of a handbook for vocational educators in secondary schools in Alabama contains guidelines that should be considered by vocational education and special education personnel during the program placement and training of special education students. The guide is divided into four sections. Section 1 introduces the federal legislation (Public Law 94-142 and 94-482), which deal with educational opportunities for the handicapped and vocational education. In Section 2, guidelines for program placement are outlined, including the process, availability of training, list of resources, alternatives for training, and development of vocational individualized educational plans. Section 3 contains guidelines for occupational assessment, such as responsibility, use of agencies outside the school system, and methods of assessment. The last section outlines guidelines for vocational training for the handicapped, including responsibilities of the vocational teacher, guidance counselor, and outside agencies; coordination of training; instructional setting; curriculum; and student evaluation. (KC)

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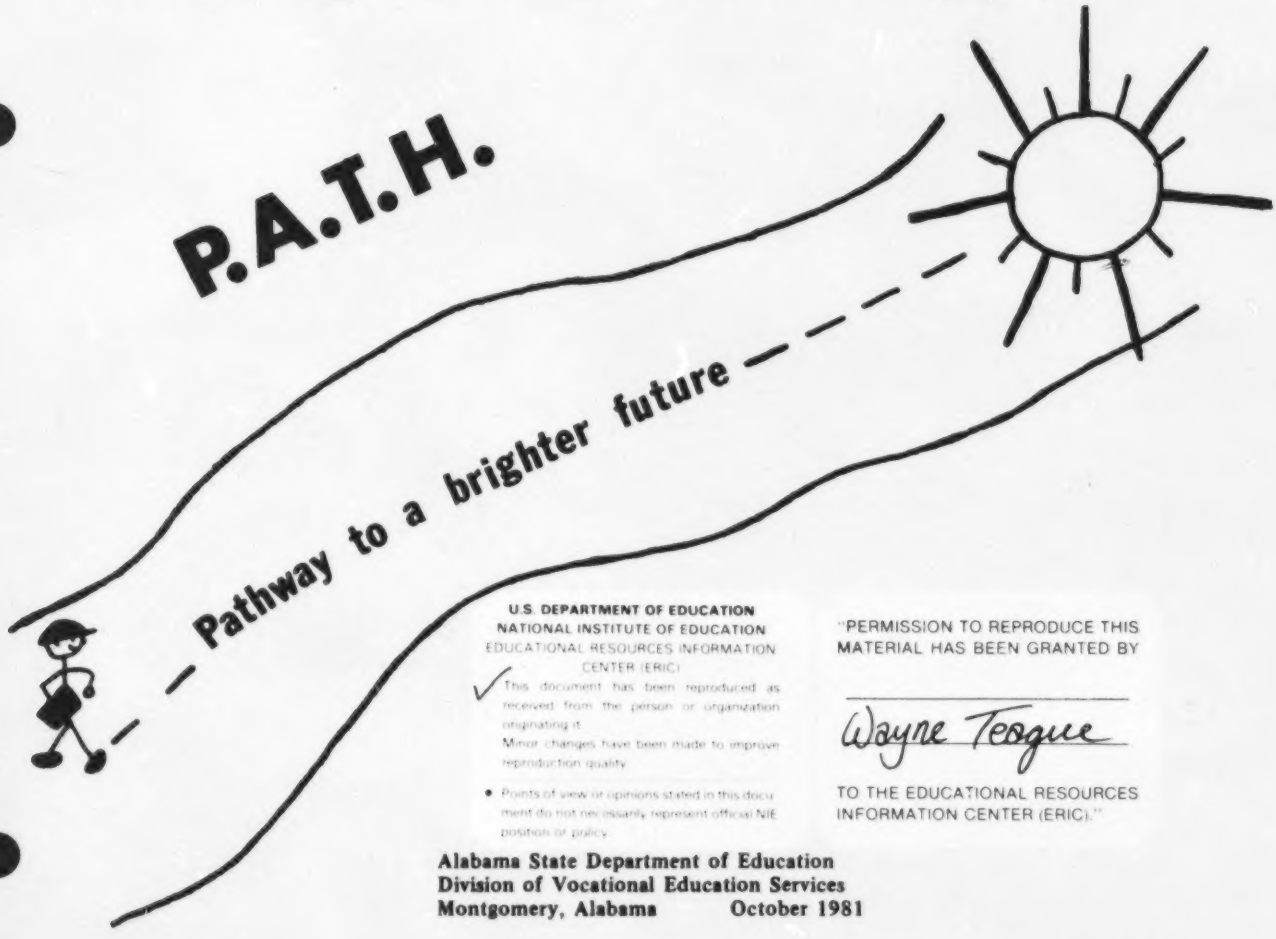
Special Needs Handbook

Volume II

Guidelines for Vocational Placement, Assessment and Training of the Handicapped



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GUIDELINES FOR VOCATIONAL PLACEMENT, ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING OF THE HANDICAPPED

State of Alabama
Department of Education
Division of Vocational Education Services
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Wayne Teague
State Superintendent of Education

October, 1981

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This publication has been reviewed in compliance with Public Law 94-482, Title II of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976 for the elimination of sex bias, sex discrimination, and sex-role stereotyping.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Vocational Education amendments of 1976 require education to look at each person as an individual. It encourages educators to use their imagination and creativity to meet the special and unique learning needs of youth and adults with academic or economic handicaps and mental or physical disabilities which prevent them from succeeding in the regular vocational programs.

Public Law 94-482 defines vocational education as organized educational programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment, or for additional preparation for a career requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree. Public Law 94-142 further includes vocational education in the definition of special education. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that "no otherwise qualified handicapped individual... shall solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

The decision to place a special education student into vocational education should be consistent with the basic purpose of vocational education; i.e., "vocational instruction which is designed upon its completion to prepare individuals for employment in a specific occupation or a cluster of closely related occupations in an occupational field, and which is especially and particularly suited to the needs of those engaged in, or preparing to engage in, such occupation or occupations." Since vocational education is included in P.L. 94-142 as part of the definition of special education, every special education student must have an equal opportunity along with non-handicapped students to receive vocational training.

This publication contains guidelines that should be considered by vocational education and special education during the program placement and training of special education students in vocational education.

The parts of the text that are blocked are guidelines; the unblocked portions are considerations and explanatory information.

II. GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAM PLACEMENT

A. Policy and Procedures

Local school systems should establish policies and procedures for making the vocational program placement decision for special education students. This decision should be made early enough to establish a sequential and progressive plan for the student to receive maximum benefits from the program. This means providing the student with sufficient experiences to make a meaningful choice of an occupational program, receiving appropriate training for entry level employment, including prevocational and/or work adjustment training; job placement, and follow-up in the job market.

In developing procedures for meeting the policy the LEA should consider the following questions.

- Are all available sources used to gather information for making the placement decision?

- Is information from all sources documented and carefully considered?

- Is the placement decision made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of assessment data, and the placement options?

- Is the placement decision made in conformity with the least restrictive environment?

- Is the placement made as close as possible to the student's home?

- Have all the available options for vocational placement been considered?

- Have placement restraints been placed on the handicapped student that are not levied against the non-handicapped?

- Does the student have equal access to regular vocational programs along with non-handicapped students?

B. Guidelines For Program Placement

1. The process for placing special education students into occupational preparatory programs should begin no later than the end of the eighth grade level or by the student's 15th birthday and should follow the general steps outlined below.

   (a) Referral of a special education student to vocational education through the initial IEP process or through an annual up-date of IEP. Referral to vocational education means the inclusion of vocational personnel on the IEP Committee at such time that the IEP Committee begins considering vocational programs as an option for the student. Initial referral for vocational consideration should occur in the Spring for placement in the next school year.

   (b) An occupational assessment is accomplished through a collective effort of special education, vocational education, and vocational guidance and counseling. (See Section III, Guidelines for Assessment.)

   (c) An evaluation of the assessment data is completed to determine the most appropriate options for placement.

   (d) Development of the vocational implementation plan of the IEP and placement into the program.

2. An occupational goal should be established as a result of the vocational assessment process and prior to program placement and so stated in the vocational implementation plan of the IEP. The occupational goal, once established, should be the basis for development of the vocational

implementation plan and all subsequent decisions pertaining to program placement efforts for the student. The occupational goal should be established after assessment and should be a result of the following considerations.

(a) Evaluation of the data from the occupational assessment of the student to include:

(1) Student interest
(2) Student capability
(3) Student behavior
(4) Academic performance
(5) Experience

(b) Job market data.

(c) Least restrictive occupational environment.

(d) Modifications needed on the job that might influence a potential employer's consideration for employing.

EXPLANATION: An occupational program means a vocational program that provides training in the skills that are performed in a specific occupational cluster, and where the purpose of the program is to prepare the student to be placed in the occupation at entry level.

An occupational goal means a written statement of the end results expected from the training program. It is recommended that occupational goal statements be written in broad enough terms to allow flexibility of training and job placement. For example, an occupational goal of placement into the automotive cluster of occupations rather than placement into an automotive transmissions specialty would be more appropriate.

3. The availability of training facility or programs within the school system should not be a constraint for proper program placement of a handicapped student. Under P.L. 94-142, the school system is responsible for providing the training called for in the IEP either through establishing a special program in-school or contracting with an appropriate agency outside the school system through which the training will be provided.

4. The expected level of achievement of current program objectives should not be a constraint on placement of a handicapped student into the program. There are many occupations that have within the total occupational cluster a group of tasks that one with limited capacity could perform without being expected to progress to the most technical skills of the job. The attainment of the lesser skill groups of tasks of a particular occupation would enable one with limited capacity to become a permanently employed, self-sustaining wage earner in the community. Based upon this concept, programs should be modified in terms of current expected achievement levels to incorporate a sequence of job entry levels of varying expectancies to accommodate persons with varying capabilities.

5. A list of available resources for vocational training both within and outside the school system should be maintained and made available to special education during the IEP process when special education students are being considered for vocational placement.

Suggested Considerations

- Direct services by the local education agency such as:

  - Regular programs with necessary modification
  - Existing cooperative programs
  - Field trips
  - Special projects funded from within the school system
  - Establishment of a separate specialized program
  - Sheltered workshops within the school system

- Collaborative agreements with other public educational agencies to provide vocational education, such as:

  - Vocational rehabilitation training programs
  - CETA programs
  - Vocational and technical institutions, such as technical colleges
  - Specialized technical schools such as vocational schools for the deaf and blind
  - Alabama Industrial Development Training Programs

- Agreements or contracts with private schools, agencies, or institutions to purchase services.

- Agreements or contracts with public agencies (other than schools) to secure services such as mental health, day care facilities, etc.

- Agreements or contracts with local employers to provide on-the-job training.

- Other agencies or organizations that can provide diagnostic services and/or consultation services, such as:

  - Federal agencies
  - Local community (public and private)
  - Institutions for the neglected and delinquent
  - Business/industrial community
  - Special interest groups
  - State agencies
  - Private nonprofit organizations
  - Citizens organizations

6. When the handicapped student is placed in an occupational training environment outside the school system such as private or public agency contracted for such training, the LEA which placed the student is responsible for insuring that the vocational goals and objectives of the IEP are accomplished, maintaining the IEP to determine changes in the vocational goals and objectives or appropriate placement, and facilitating the due process procedure. However, the receiving school or training institute has the responsibility of carrying out their part of the IEP and insuring that the student's rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are protected.

Appropriate alternatives for placement prior to an occupational program might include but are not limited to:

- Prevocational training for work adjustment when needed.
- Contracting with other schools or outside agencies for training related to the vocational program in which the student is waiting to enroll.
- Basic skill training related to the respective vocational program.
- Work experience training.

7. Each school system should have and maintain current job demand data relative to their geographical area that is unique to employment of handicapped students.

Suggested Types of Information

- List of employers in area under Affirmative Action Plan
- Job demand categorized by USOE codes
- Follow-up data on handicapped students previously placed categorized by USOE codes.
- Information on job requirements related to:
  - Physical demands
  - Working conditions
  - General education development
  - Specific vocational preparation
- Worker traits such as aptitudes, interests, and temperament
- Local advisory counsel
- Associations representing the handicapped
- Alabama Industrial Relations
- Vocational Management Information System (SDE)
- Governor's Committee on employment of the handicapped
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Local employers
- Alabama Development Office: Facilities and Information Network Development (FIND)
- Other Community Resources such as Chamber of Commerce

8. Vocational IEP Development: A vocational implementation plan should be on file with the respective vocational teacher for each special education student in vocational education who requires special assistance or program modifications.

Explanation: A vocational program means:

- An occupational preparation program, or
- an exploratory vocational program which has the dual purpose of providing the student with experiences to help him/her make a meaningful occupation choice for placement into an occupational program, and to provide a medium in which an assessment can be made of the student's potential or
- a prevocational program for the purpose of providing the student with prerequisite generic skills or personnel adjustment training for entry into an occupational preparation program.

(a) The implementation plan should be developed as part of the legislatively mandated IEP process prior to the student entering the program.

(b) The receiving vocational teacher, vocational guidance counselor, and person/s knowledgeable in vocational assessment should be involved in preparing the vocational implementation plan in addition to those persons mandated by legislation to be involved in the IEP process.

(c) Implementation Plan Content for Exploratory Program:

The content of a vocational implementation plan for a handicapped student placed into an exploratory program where special assistance is needed should include at least the following elements.

(1) Assessment goals (See III, Occupational Assessment).

Explanation: Assessment goals are usually decision strategies such as:

- Does the student have general or specific interests in vocational areas?
- Does student have general and/or specific aptitude for general or specific occupational areas?
- Does the student need work adjustment training?
- What program modifications are needed for program placement for training?
- What specific occupational area is the student most suited?

(2) Short term objectives for assessment.

(3) Method by which objectives for assessment will be accomplished.

(4) Dates at which assessment decisions will be made.

(5) Results of each assessment decision (completed at appropriate time during exploratory program).

(6) Final recommendation for disposition as a result of total assessment from exploratory program.

(d) Final recommendation resulting from exploratory program should be integrated with other data through the IEP process mandated by Federal legislation for final placement decision for occupational training.

(e) Implementation Plan Content for Occupational Programs: The implementation plan for occupational training should contain the following elements:

(1) An occupational goal for job placement.

(2) Annual goals that support the occupational goal.

(3) Short term measureable objectives that lead to the accomplishment of the annual goals.

(4) Evaluation dates and methods used for evaluation of the short term objectives.

(5) Modifications needed in the program to accommodate the handicapped student.

(f) Disposition of the Implementation Plan: The vocational implementation plan of the IEP for each student should be on file with the teacher of the program in which the student is enrolled and a copy on file with the special educational teacher responsible for the student. The plan on file with the vocational program should be given to the special educational teacher when the student completes or is removed from the vocational program.

III. GUIDELINES FOR OCCUPATIONAL ASSESSMENT

A. Policy and Procedures

The local school system should establish procedures for completing an occupational assessment for each handicapped student being considered for placement into vocational education. The purpose of occupational assessment is to determine student interest and occupational potential for establishing and occupational goal for the student. Assessment data should be used for determining the vocational training environment that best matches the students' capability, job potential, interest, and occupational goal. The procedures should, at a minimum, cover provisions for:

1. Determining students' readiness for occupational assessment and for providing appropriate training to remedy deficiencies in readiness.

2. A variety of assessment components.

3. Establishing school-based assessment sites or for contracting with other agencies for occupational assessments of handicapped students.

4. Determining qualified personnel needed to conduct assessments.

5. Adopting assessment components as needed to meet the unique needs of a handicapped individual.

B. Guidelines for Occupational Assessment

1. Occupational assessment should be completed prior to entry into an occupational preparatory program.

2. Occupational assessment for program placement should be the shared responsibility of Special Education, Guidance Counseling, and Vocational Education and should be accomplished collectively by these agencies.

3. One or more of the following agencies outside the school system should be involved when their expertise will make the process more efficient and effective.

   (a) Vocational Rehabilitation

   (b) Mental Health

   (c) Potential employers

   (d) Other specialized institutions such as school for the deaf and blind and universities

4. At least two methods of occupational assessment should be employed to help determine appropriate placement for handicapped student into an occupational vocational program. Of the assessment methods used, at least one should be a type that utilizes methods other than written or oral question-answer tests.

5. Assessment methods should include but are not limited to the following:

   (a) Work sampling methods

   (b) Observational trial periods in work stations or exploratory programs

   (c) Work trial experiences on the job

   (d) Work adjustment and work readiness methods

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are numerous occupational assessment tools available through commercial providers. Caution should be taken to insure that whatever evaluation tools are used are valid in appropriately assessing occupational potential. Assessment methods may be developed in school but should be tested sufficiently to determine whether or not they work in terms of predicting student potential and appropriate placement before they are fully implemented as an assessment tool.

It is recommended that the placement of a handicapped student be into an exploratory program as part of the required assessment for entry into an occupational program. The term exploratory program as referred to in these guidelines

means any program that provides hands-on experiences representing at least nine occupational cluster areas. The purpose of such as exploratory program is to provide the student with experiences of sufficient breadth to enable him / her to make a meaningful occupational choice for future training and serve as an assessment medium to help determine occupational potential. Such exploratory programs should include but are not limited to supervised work experiences through business; special projects to provide hands-on experience and assessment; field trips; and rotation through in-house occupational preparation programs for the purpose of career information and assessment.

6. The data resulting from the occupational assessment should be evident in the vocational IEP implementation plan for each respective handicapped student placed into an occupational preparatory program.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR THE HANDICAPPED

A. Policy and Procedures

Each local school system has the moral and legal responsibility to provide vocational training opportunities for the handicapped student that is consistent with Public Laws 94-482, 94-142, 93-112, and Alabama Law 106. Each LEA should insure that vocational training is available to the handicapped as a discrete element on a continuum of career education experiences at an equal level as that provided for nonhandicapped students. To insure that this policy is carried out each local school system should have policies and procedures for providing vocational training for the handicapped that incorporate, at a minimum, provision for:

1. Coordination of training services between special education, vocational education, and vocational rehabilitation.

2. Providing training in prevocational skills, to help insure that handicapped students will be prepared to participate in occupational preparatory programs.

3. Providing appropriate settings and program modifications for training of handicapped students in regular vocational programs.

4. Establishing special vocational programs for handicapped students who cannot achieve satisfactorily in regular vocational programs.

5. Providing modifications to scheduling, curriculum, equipment, and facilities for handicapped students who need such services while they are in vocational training.

6. Providing handicapped students work experience programs as part of their vocational training programs.

7. Providing sheltered pre-employment (work adjustment) training to handicapped students who need such training in vocational education.

8. Providing travel training for handicapped students in vocational education to prepare them to travel independently to and from employment.

9. Coordination of functions and articulation of all areas of funding.

   This includes:

   (a) Articulation of vocational education excess cost funds and special education excess cost funds.

   (b) Articulation with vocational rehabilitation services.

   (c) Faculty knowledge of funding for the handicapped.

   (d) Other agency funding, such as special grants, Title I, etc.

10. Insuring that all vocational teachers have sufficient knowledge of available excess cost funding for the handicapped to allow them to adequately plan, articulate, and provide needed services to the handicapped students enrolled in their respective programs.

B. Guidelines For Training

1. Responsibility for Vocational Training

   (a) The vocational teacher in which a handicapped student has been placed has the primary responsibility of providing the instruction in the respective occupational area for the student.

   This includes the following aspects:

   (1) Responsibility of helping to develop the vocational implementation plan of the IEP for training of the student.

   (2) Providing the delivery system for the training of the student.

   (3) Maintaining internal course progress evaluation and remediation for the student.

   (4) Modifying the delivery system to meet the individual needs of the student.

   (5) Articulating with the vocational guidance counselor in those aspects of the program that relate to the functions of guidance counseling pertaining to the student.

   (6) Referring to the responsible special education teacher for articulating the needed academic skills related to the vocational program.

   (7) Making proper referrals through the vocational director or principal to special education for assistance or consultation when program objectives are not being met by the student.

(8) Taking proper action in the instructional setting to insure that the program is in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P. L. 93-112).

(b) In cases where the training is being accomplished through contact with an agency outside the school system, the responsibilities listed in (1) through (8) above should be listed in the contract as the responsibility of the contracted agency.

(c) The vocational guidance counselor should help with the following functions pertaining to the training of handicapped students enrolled in vocational programs:

(1) Provide the vocational teacher and/or special education person up-to-date information on job demand and job characteristics related to the geographical area served by the school system and unique to handicapped students enrolled in vocational programs.

(2) Provide the vocational teacher consultation and assistance pertaining to social and personal problems of students on request by the vocational teacher.

(3) Provide the vocational teacher with assistance pertaining to incourse evaluation and assessment of achievement for handicapped students when requested.

(4) Provide the vocational teacher with assistance pertaining to knowledge of human development and interpersonal relations with parents and other teachers pertaining to specific problems with handicapped students.

SPECIAL EDUCATION:

Special Education has the primary responsibility of the following functions pertaining to the training of handicapped students enrolled in vocational education:

- Insuring that procedures mandated by P. L. 94-142 for all special education students are carried out for handicapped students enrolled in vocational programs.
- Receiving and processing student referrals from vocational persons pertaining to handicapped students enrolled in vocational programs.
- Assisting vocational personnel in development of the vocational implementation plans of the IEP for handicapped students enrolled in vocational programs.
- Providing vocational personnel with knowledge about available supportive services and pertinent legislation pertaining to the handicapped students that are enrolled in vocational training.

- Providing vocationally related academic skill training to handicapped students enrolled in vocational programs.

- Providing consultant services and assistance to vocational personnel on delivery strategies and methodology pertaining to unique needs of handicapped students enrolled in vocational education.

2. Coordination of Training

(a) The vocational teacher should meet with the special education teacher periodically to insure that handicapped students enrolled in both programs receive complementary instruction in both programs.

Explanation:

The academic skills being taught by the special education teacher for the handicapped should complement the content of the vocational program in which the handicapped student is enrolled. For example, a handicapped student enrolled in a construction program should receive remedial and/or basic training in math and reading skills related to construction, such as math required to read a ruler, math required to square a corner, math required to read a level, etc. The only way this can occur is through coordination between the special education teacher and the vocational teacher for those handicapped students enrolled in both classes.

NOTE:

The teaching of vocationally related academic skills in the special education class should not negate the teaching of basic academic skills in special education classes when a total deficit exists in the basic skills, nor the responsibility of the vocational teacher teaching vocationally related skills that are normally part of the regular vocational program for nonhandicapped students.

(b) Training in social skills, worker attitudes, and personal adjustment should be made available as necessary for handicapped students through coordination of special education and vocational education.

(c) The vocational counselor should be actively involved in periodic reviews of student progress of handicapped students enrolled in the vocational programs.

(d) Any support personnel such as aides that are assigned to vocational programs to assist with handicapped students and who are being salaried 100% from set-aside funds should be assigned functions that are directly supportive of enhancing student learning. This means such personnel should spend 100% time with handicapped students.

(e) Work adjustment training should be an integral part of the total training program for the handicapped student enrolled in vocational education.

Explanation:

Work adjustment training means any training needed by the handicapped student to prepare them to enter into any phase of the total vocational program, including the assessment phase. For example, if a handicapped student lacks sufficient communicative skills to be given an occupational assessment, then work adjustment training to provide such skills would be part of the training program outlined on the IEP for the student.

(f) All handicapped students enrolled in vocational programs should receive job readiness training as part of the vocational program.

Explanation:

Job readiness training means training to provide the handicapped student with the necessary skills to obtain employment, such as how to find a job, how to prepare for an interview, etc. Job readiness training should occur as close as possible to actual job placement and should be coordinated between special education and vocational education.

3. Instructional Setting

(a) Class size.

(1) When handicapped students are enrolled in a regular vocational program and modifications are necessary, the total class enrollment should be reduced from the maximum allowed student-teacher ratio of 25/1. The guidelines listed below may be used to reduce class size.

Use the formula:

Maximum allowable regular class size (25, see vocational standards) minus the number of handicapped enrolled X the constant for handicapping condition (listed in Table 1 below).

For example, using the table below for a regular vocational class with 5 EMR students enrolled:

25 - (5 X 2) = 15 maximum size for class where 5 EMR students are enrolled.

TABLE 1

Handicapping Conditions	Constant
Educable Mentally Retarded	2
Trainable Mentally Retarded	3.5
Emotionally Conflicted	3.5
Specific Learning Disability	2
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	2
Deaf and Blind	3.5
Blind	3.5
Visually Impaired	2.5
Multi-Handicapped	5
Orthopedically Impaired and other Health Impaired	2

(2) When the handicapping condition requires modifications to only the facility or equipment and does not require more concentration of the instructor's time for the handicapped student during instruction, no class reduction should be required, and the formula in (1) above should be disregarded.

(3) If the regular vocational program has handicapped students enrolled who require no program modifications, no class reduction should be accomplished.

(4) When a separate specialized class for handicapped students is established (100 percent program), the following maximum class size applies:

TABLE 2

Specialized Class	Maximum Class Size
Educable Mentally Retarded	10
Trainable Mentally Retarded	8
Emotionally Conflicted	4
Specific Learning Disability	10
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	10
Deaf and Blind	4
Blind	4
Visually Impaired	8
Multi-Handicapped	4
Orthopedically Impaired and other Health Impaired	5

NOTE:

The maximum class size established through the use of the formula and tables one and two may be transformed into teacher-pupil ratios and obtained by providing paraprofessional assistance to the instructor without reducing class size if desired.

4. Curriculum, instructional planning, lesson plans, and instructional delivery should be of a format that clearly allows:

   (a) Measurability of predictable outcome of students.

   (b) Clearly defined and measurable steps that provide for evaluation of student progress and the identification of remedial needs.

   (c) The student to learn meaningful content that directly supports program objectives.

   (d) As much individualization in the delivery process as possible.

   (e) Accountability in terms of what was taught, how it was taught, why the student did or did not learn, and why the instruction was successful or unsuccessful.

5. Progressive Evaluation of Student Achievement.

   Review of student progress in the vocational program should be done at least annually along with the regular IEP revision process mandated by Federal legislation. Continuous teacher evaluation measured against the short term objectives in the vocational implementation plan of the IEP should be accomplished. When it is found that a handicapped student is not being successful in the vocational program as indicated by either the annual review process or the ongoing evaluation of the short term objectives, the following two actions should be taken.

   (a) An evaluation of the program modifications and/or special services being provided for that student should be accomplished by someone other than the respective teacher. If it is determined that program modifications or special services have not been accomplished to the extent necessary and are obtainable through reasonable means, corrections should be made.

   (b) If it is determined that program modifications and special services have been accomplished to the extent possible and are not the cause of the student being unsuccessful, a reassessment of the student's vocational placement should be accomplished through the IEP process and corrections made.

   (c) Student grading should be derived from evaluation measured against the objectives stated in the vocational implementation plan.

   (d) Assessment data derived from the evaluation of short term objectives in the vocational IEP should be used as the major factors in determining needed remediation by the student, modifications needed to the program in terms of delivery of instruction, methods of instruction, and needed services that may be articulated with other resources such as special education. Poor achievement of the handicapped student should not be viewed as failure of the student, but failure of the program to provide the necessary assistance and modifications to enable the student to learn.